



# Kingston United Reformed Church Elders' handbook 2015)

[http://www.kingstonurc.org/KURC\\_Elders\\_HANDBOOK.pdf](http://www.kingstonurc.org/KURC_Elders_HANDBOOK.pdf)

*(Issued December 2014)*

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# INTRODUCTION

At the time of writing, John Watts prepares outline monthly **elders' duty rotas** for the whole year each January and publishes these on the elders' section of KURC website - [http://www.kingstonurc.org/kurc\\_elders.html](http://www.kingstonurc.org/kurc_elders.html)

Allocated duties for the current and the following month are reviewed at the beginning of each elders' meeting so that people can swap duties as necessary. The revised rota will appear on the website a few days later, and the church secretary will normally post a hard copy version of the rota for the two months in question on the elders' noticeboard opposite the door to minister's vestry shortly afterwards. Myrtle Austin will phone to remind you of your duty a day or two before the Sunday in question. If you cannot do a duty for any reason, *it is up to you to find a replacement* and, if between meetings, to let John and Myrtle know about the change. It would be helpful if you could also mark the change on the rota on the elders' notice-board so that we have an up-to-date record on church premises of who is doing what.

*Please note that in the paragraphs below relating to the sound system, the **sound cupboard** is the unit with a wooden door on the rear wall of the sanctuary and the **sound box** the unit on the side wall of the sanctuary with a glass door!*

## VESTRY ELDER

The vestry elder is responsible for the general smooth running of each Sunday service and to be on hand if the minister/worship leader needs anything or if anything looks wrong.

### (a) 10.00 and 11.00 services

Aim to arrive at least 45 minutes before the service is due to start, to give yourself plenty of time for your tasks, and get hold of a copy of the service paper at the back of the sanctuary or from a welcomer.

Specifically:

- ◆ Turn on the **vestibule lights** (if they aren't already on) via switch number 17 in the sound cupboard. This opens with your key to the OLD sanctuary doors.
- ◆ To provide a degree of security the sliding door on the rear stair should be checked and bolted (from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor side) on opening the premises.

- ◆ Also check that fire exit doors at Mayo Hall and minister's vestry are unobstructed.
- ◆ Put **A-boards** outside church and foyer. The 'church A-board' is kept beside the tardis; the 'foyer A-boards' in the lift lobby.
- ◆ Check the **sound system** is set up and ready to go. There will be someone rota'd to operate the system (but you are the back-up), so make sure that s/he is aware of any particular circumstances or requirements, especially if we have a visiting minister/worship leader.
- ◆ Fill the **water carafe** (in the elders' cupboard; open with key no. 10) and put it on the shelf below the minister/worship leader's lectern or where appropriate.
- ◆ Place a **hymn book with service paper** on the minister/worship leader's lectern.
- ◆ Ensure the **offertory platter** (kept in the tardis in the back corner of the sanctuary) is in place on the communion table or on the small table in front.
- ◆ On Communion Sundays, check the **grey armchair** is behind the table, and the **6 grey chairs** arranged in a semi-circle
- ◆ Take the large green **Bible** from the lectern at the front of the sanctuary into room 3, ready to be carried at the start of the service.
- ◆ Mark the day's **readings** (check with service paper) with bookmarks
- ◆ Get together with all available elders in room 3 five minutes or so before the service and **lead the minister/worship leader and elders in prayer.**
- ◆ Wait with the Bible at the back of the sanctuary at the start of the service, while the church secretary or stand-in reads the notices. The minister/worship leader will then stand, followed by the congregation, which gives you your cue. **Carry the Bible** from the back of the sanctuary to the lectern and place it there, open at the first reading. Walk back down the side aisle.
- ◆ If there isn't a greeter/welcomer by the entrance door, sit there yourself, at an angle so you can see into the vestibule, in case of late arrivals.
- ◆ If there is to be a **baptism**, place the font on the communion table and check there is water in it. The font is kept in the tardis; but if it is not there check the communion table cupboards.

(b) 11.30 service

You won't, alas, have time to go to the Mayo Hall for coffee (so ask someone to get you one!). That done, locate the 11.30 worship leader and ask if s/he needs anything. Also, remember that you are responsible for the

sound system for this service. This will still be set up from the earlier service but may need adjustment! *Finally, do remember that it falls to you to ensure*

*that there is someone to turn off the lights and clear/secure the building before you leave at the end of the service.*

Specifically

- ◆ Check with the worship leader which **microphones** are required and liaise with the 10.00 sound operator.
- ◆ You may need to get the **handheld mike** from the LH cupboard in the communion table (top shelf). If so, fit the appropriate charged battery from the battery charger in the sound cupboard.
- ◆ Make sure the **water carafe** is filled and the glass clean
- ◆ Put out copies of **service sheet** (11.30 version with general info only) on first couple of rows and ensure copy available to worship leader.
- ◆ Put out two **offertory bags** so that they are easily accessible to the worship leader.
- ◆ As soon as you have completed all this, stand by entrance to the sanctuary from the vestibule to **welcome people** entering from the street and hand out service sheets (11.30 version, as above).
- ◆ Shortly before the service starts, take the worship leader to one side and **pray** with her/him.
- ◆ During the service, **adjust sound levels** as appropriate from the controls in the sound box. Try to make sure the two pairs of loudspeakers for the BACK of the church are switched off, and the two FRONT pairs are on. This will reduce the “echo” effect in the Sanctuary

At the end of the service:

- ◆ Turn off the **sound system**. Put all mikes carefully onto the top shelf of the left-hand cupboard in the communion table, put the rechargeables back into their chargers in the sound cupboard. Lock up the sound box and switch it off at the wall, putting the keys in the sound cupboard.
- ◆ Check the **lights** in the sanctuary and the vestibule have all been turned off except the ones indicated on the switch panel.
- ◆ Clear away the **carafe and glass** and return them to the elders’ cupboard in the kitchen
- ◆ Take the **offertory bags** into the minister’s vestry and empty them into the cloth bag on peg beside the minister’s gown. Return the bags and offertory platter to the tardis.
- ◆ Take in **A-boards** from sanctuary and foyer entrances.
- ◆ Turn off **foyer screen** display from Centre Manager’s office.
- ◆ Turn off **foyer lights**; and before leaving building.....
- ◆ Check that someone is left who will **lock up**. Otherwise you will need to do this yourself. Ie ->

Get foyer doors key from Centre Manager's office safe and switch doors to 'off' position. Lock top Yale lock. Return keys to safe.

(c) Evening service

NB you should arrive at least 30 minutes early. Jenny Milner normally sets up for the service. But if she is not there you will need to:

- position **low table** (from foyer) in front of worship leader's chair
- set **table-top lectern** (from recess under communion table) on low table, facing away from worship leader
- place a **water carafe** and glass (from the elders' cupboard) on the table
- ensure that there are a **service sheet and hymn book** on the table
- place an **offertory bag** from the tardis on a chair near the worship leader
- reverse all this at end of service.

Specifically:

- ◆ During those months when the service takes place during daylight, put out the 'church **A-board**' in front of the main entrance and remove it at the end. This A-board is normally kept at the side of the tardis.
- ◆ Find out what the worship leader needs
- ◆ You are responsible for the **sound system**. Use your OLD front door key to open the sound cupboard and switch this on via the switch on the wall to the bottom left. Unlock the door to the box (keys in sound cupboard). Turn off the rear two pairs of loudspeakers, but do make sure that the front two are on!
- ◆ Check what **microphones** are needed by the worship leader and put in re-charged batteries. These should be in the sound cupboard. The mikes are all in the LH communion table cupboard. Once the batteries are in the mikes, do check they are functioning properly.
- ◆ Ensure the **water carafe** and **hymn book** are ready on the worship leader's table.
- ◆ Retrieve the large **Bible** used for readings and have it ready to place on the minister's table-top lectern once the notices have been read and the worship leader stands.
- ◆ **Pray** with the leader and any elders, probably in the foyer, just before the service

At the end of the service:

- ◆ Put the **sound system** to bed, reversing the instructions and taking the batteries out of the lectern mike and the other mike(s). Put them into the chargers in the sound cupboard. Make sure all loudspeakers are back on ready for the following Sunday's first service. Lock up all sound equipment.
- ◆ Clear away the **water carafe and glass**
- ◆ Responsibility for ensuring that **lights** are turned off and the **building is locked up** lies with you.

## FOYER ELDER – 10.00/11.00 SERVICE

*(You are also the 'Duty Elder' as defined on page 14, Do check the specific responsibilities related to this role that are listed on pages 14 - 16.)*

Be in position 30 minutes before the service begins and, if the plasma screen isn't on, please switch it on in the office, or find someone else to do this.

- ◆ Support the 'greeters' in **welcoming people** as they come to the church via the foyer. In particular, identify any newcomers, and make sure they have welcome packs if appropriate. Make them feel at home, invite them to have coffee after the service and introduce them to a few people. Whatever you do, don't leave them with no-one to talk to.
- ◆ Before the start of the service collect a small number of **hymn books and service sheets** from the sanctuary to make available to people wanting to follow the service from the foyer. Please return hymn books after the service.
- ◆ Stay in the foyer once the service starts, to greet any further newcomers or late arrivals and make them feel comfortable about coming into the sanctuary. Some people may prefer to pass the service in the foyer, but if they are there during a service that includes **communion**, you should invite them, at an appropriate moment, to join with the rest of the congregation in taking communion in the sanctuary, if they would like to do so.
- ◆ You may want to take communion yourself by coming to the rear door of the sanctuary.
- ◆ At the end of the 10.00/11.00 service, collect the filled **offertory bags** from the communion table, find a key from a keyholder for the office safe (Ron Kingham, Phil Thompson, Ruth Anderson or Lesley Charlton), and a second person (can be any church member or friend), bag the money uncounted, in the fabric cash bag in the safe, and lock it in the safe.

- ◆ Return the empty offertory bags and tray to the back of the sanctuary and return the key to its keyholder!
- ◆ Once the 11.30 service has started and any late-comers have arrived via the foyer entrance doors, use the appropriate key from the Centre Manager's office key cabinet to put these **doors on one-way**. This will prevent people gaining access to the building unnoticed if there is no-one left in the foyer area before the service ends

## COMMUNION DUTIES

Communion is a sacramental feature of our worship in which elders play a significant role. So it's important we get things right.

You need to know about:

- preparing communion
- serving communion.

Communion is usually held three times a month:

- ◆ 10.00 communion on the first Sunday of the month
- ◆ 11.30 communion on the last Sunday of the month
- ◆ 18.30 communion on the third Sunday of the month.

However, this pattern can vary in the case of say joint services with local churches, so listen for advance warning of such changes at elders' meetings! There are additional communion services, for which elders' support is needed, on and around major Christian festivals and especially on Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve.

Elders' duty rotas specify the elders scheduled for each communion service. Six elders are listed for 10.00 communion, but only one for other services. The relevant vestry elder should act as back-up (no. 2) at these services.

For the 10.00 service each elder has a number assigned from 1 to 6. This number represents the chair in which you will sit at the front. Number 1 sits on the far left, looking from the back of the sanctuary, while no. 6 sits on the far right.

### (a) Preparing communion:

Preparation is the same whatever the service. The only variation is the number of plates and trays you are preparing. Elder no. 1 on the rota has the task of preparing before the service and cleaning up afterwards. This is quite a laborious task for one person so **support is needed from no. 2 on the rota, both before and afterwards**. Please allow at least half an hour



for this process and time it to finish before the congregation starts to assemble in the church. So arrive by 9am at the latest!

If you have not prepared communion before, join another elder with communion duty before it's your turn and work with him/her to get an idea of what is involved.

All the equipment (plates, glasses, chalice) and wine are in the elders' cupboard in the kitchen. This can be opened with key 10 from the key-safe in the Centre Manager's office. The communion linen is in a nearby drawer.

Checklist for communion elder 1 as follows:

- ◆ Bring in some bread, cut into small squares, together with a few pieces of gluten-free crispbread, plus a whole slice of bread or a bread roll for the minister to break during the service
- ◆ Place the bread squares/crispbread on the relevant number of plates (6 for 10.00/11.00 service; 2-3 for the 11.30; normally one only for evening service). As a rule of thumb, 30-ish pieces of bread per plate suffice for morning services and 15-20 for evening service.
- ◆ On a further plate put a whole slice or a roll for the minister to break.
- ◆ If, for any reason, you expect the service to be particularly busy, you can use extra bread or prepare an extra plate to sit at the back of the church as a reserve supply.
- ◆ Pour communion wine into the glasses, using only the outer circle of 18 glasses per tray, but matching the number of trays used to the number of plates as above. Also pour some wine into the chalice. Inform the church secretary if wine stocks are running low.
- ◆ Use the little red watering can (also in the cupboard) to do the pouring. Don't over-fill the cups, for otherwise it can be hard to pick them up without spilling
- ◆ Set the communion table. One large cloth is needed for the table itself while the smaller individual cloths are required to cover the trays (rectangular) and the plates (round), and a small cloth to cover the chalice. Set the minister's small bookstand on the table with the communion chalice/plates/trays.
- ◆ Communion cloths are in a drawer near the elders' cupboard. Please check these after the service for stains, and speak to Alison Holt (who will inform June Davis) if they need washing or pressing.
- ◆ (Sides-people will place wooden bowls for retiring communion collections at each sanctuary exit.)
- ◆ It falls to communion elders 1 and 2 to clear up, wash up and put everything back in place. Make sure you collect up all of the glasses

- ◆ from their holes in the backs of chairs. They are easy to miss, so ALL ELDERS MIGHT WANT TO HELP.....
- ◆ Throw away unused wine (don't decant back into bottles – this makes the wine go sludgy).

## (b) Serving communion

### 10.00 and 11.00 services:

#### Stage 1:

Please remember to turn up at church in plenty of time for the service when you are on communion duty. When you arrive, find the no.1 elder and let him/her know you are there.

#### Stage 2:

Before the service starts, no.1 elder should make sure that the other duty elders are present and know which number they are supposed to be. Find substitutes from current elders (or from non-serving elders if necessary).

#### Stage 3:

Preparation for communion will usually follow the offertory in the order of service. As the offertory is being collected by the sides-people, the serving elders should gather at the back of the sanctuary by the main doors. *Remember to take your hymn book with you.* After the offertory prayer, the sides-people will walk back down the side aisles.

NB If you are **not** on duty, keep an eye open at this point, and if you see that there are fewer than the number of elders needed at the back of the church, be prepared to help, and step in if necessary.

As they reach the back of the church the elders should walk down the main aisle in pairs as follows:

<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

.....with 3 and 4 in the lead. On reaching the communion table, 'splay out', with numbers 3 and 4 taking the furthest seats to the left and right respectively and numbers 1 and 6 the nearest.

#### Stage 4:

When the elders reach the front, those nearest the minister should remove the cloths covering the elements and place them to one side. Everyone sits down together.

**Stage 5:**

After the minister has broken the bread, and at the point when s/he picks up the first plate of bread, the elders should all rise and receive the plates from the minister. Once all the plates have been distributed the elders move down the church to serve the congregation, as follows:

*(as you look at the congregation from your position at the front)*

Number 1 – go to the right-hand aisle and serve all in rows to the right

Number 2 – go to the right-hand aisle and serve first three in rows to the left

Number 3 – go to the central aisle and serve first three in rows to the right

Number 4 – go to the central aisle and serve first three in rows to the left

Number 5 – go to the left-hand aisle and serve first three in rows to the right

Number 6 – go to the left-hand aisle and serve all rows to the left - including the organist.

The most practical way to serve bread and wine is to start with the person furthest away. Whoever reaches the back first should help by serving along the back row.

**Stage 6:**

The elders should regroup by the main doors at the back (in the same order as before) and when everyone has been served, walk back up the main aisle and take their places, standing in front of their chair. The minister will then take their plates in turn. The minister will then take the last plate and serve each of the elders in sequence. The last elder served will then take the plate and serve the minister who will then take the plate and put it down. The bread may be eaten simultaneously on the minister's invitation or as the bread is offered – so make sure you listen to what the minister says beforehand! The elders should remain standing at this point.

**Stage 7:**

After the minister has lifted the chalice, s/he will hand each of the elders a tray of wine. Once all the elders have received their tray they should serve the congregation, as per Stage 5 above. Unlike the bread, the wine will be taken together on the minister's invitation. When the minister invites the congregation to pray, the elders can then sit down, holding their glass until the final hymn is announced, when they can return their glasses to a tray.

**Stage 8:**

At the end of the service the minister will give the benediction and then briefly take her/his seat for a few moments of quiet.

## **11.30 service**

### **Stage 1:**

Please remember to turn up at the church in plenty of time for the service when you are on communion duty. You and the vestry elder are rota'd for this duty, but you take the lead.

### **Stage 2:**

Before the service starts, the communion elder should make sure that the vestry elder is present for support in serving communion and, if not, find a substitute from any other elders around.

### **Stage 3:**

As the 11.30 service is less formal and more interactive than traditional worship, it makes sense to check with the minister in advance how s/he plans to stage communion and what part you and the vestry elder will play.

### **Stage 4:**

The congregation will be gathered in a more random way in the sanctuary and, generally speaking, the two elders are there to shepherd or oversee the trays around the congregation rather than pass them round formally. Then make sure the trays are returned to the minister who will serve the two elders, one of whom should then serve the minister.

## **Evening worship**

Communion for evening worship is very low key. As for the 11.30 service, only one elder is rota'd, although, unlike at the 11.30 service, there is normally little need to involve the vestry elder. However you can call upon him/her as necessary. Again, be at church in plenty of time to set out the elements before the congregation arrives.

### **Stage 1:**

The congregation normally sits in a square for this service and, during the hymn immediately preceding the communion, the communion elder moves into a seat beside the minister. If there is no free seat, simply ask the person(s) there to swap with you. The cloths are removed at this point.

### **Stage 2:**

From then on, the communion service is similar to the morning, in that the minister will hand the plate and tray to the elder(s) who will walk round the square, offering the bread and wine in turn. Don't forget the organist/pianist.

### **Stage 3:**

On returning with the plate or tray, the minister serves the elder(s) and the elder(s) serves the minister.

**Stage 4:**

The bread is eaten as soon as it is received and the wine is taken together.

At the end of the service the communion elder gathers up the glasses, plates and cloths and clears up in the kitchen.

# GENERAL NOTES FOR ELDERS

## Duties and swapping duties

Please make every effort to perform your duties as allocated on the rota. It is your responsibility to make sure you know when you are expected to be on duty, so put the dates on which you are on duty in your diary as soon as you receive the relevant rotas! The 10 minutes before monthly elders' meetings are allocated for "swaps" – you need to be there promptly. If you have a problem at short notice, please try to make your own swap by telephoning/emailing fellow elders. Amend the rota on the notice board opposite the Minister's vestry, and also let John Watts know for the on-line version.

## Before a service

If you are not on duty then please still be aware of newcomers or other people who are looking for other people to talk to. Try to be around in the vestibule, the foyer or the back of the Sanctuary – just to be visible or available for people to talk to – this means being at church well in advance of the start of the service. Don't lurk anonymously in room 3! Elders' prayers are held in Room 3 five minutes before the service is due to start. All elders present should attend prayers unless they are otherwise engaged elsewhere in, say, the sanctuary or the foyer.

## Elders' meetings

These are usually at 8pm on a Tuesday during the first week of each month. Normally meetings are held in the training room (room 11) on the first floor. The church secretary will circulate an agenda in advance; please check the date of the meeting and this agenda before the meeting. All other paperwork will be emailed to you in advance. If you cannot make a particular meeting, please let the church secretary or the minister know in advance.

There is sometimes a bring & share supper before an elders' meeting, which is an ideal time to get to know each other in a less formal setting, and to discuss matters in a relaxed way. The task of co-ordinating this should, in fairness, be shared amongst elders.

## Church Meetings

These are usually held every other month at 12.00 after the joint (11.00) service on the second Sunday of the month. As a serving elder it is important that you attend church meetings, which often consider recommendations or issues coming from the eldership.

Part of our responsibilities as elders is to provide leadership for the membership and help the church meeting as it seeks to discern the will of God. If for any reason you are unable to attend a church meeting, please give your apologies to the church secretary in advance. Do please check your copy of the agenda beforehand to remind you whether you are due to lead prayers at the start of the meeting or contribute in any other way!

## Elders' Awayday

This is usually held on a Saturday early in January, (for 2015 it will be on 14<sup>th</sup> February) and is a chance for the new serving and recently "retired" elders to get together for a day of discussion and meditation on a particular theme.

## Management Groups

As part of the church committee structure, each elder is a leader or member of one of KURC's core or support groups, which also involve other church members. The structure is shown in the current Church Handbook.

## Health & Safety – fire risk assessment

Elders, as church leaders, have a particular duty of care towards fellow members of the congregation and should be familiar with the procedures outlined on the following pages.



## Health & Safety – fire risk assessment

Emergency procedures in case of fire during or around Sunday services  
To be read in conjunction with “Emergency Action Plan”

1. Following the Health & Safety audit undertaken on our behalf by Mike Simpson, I summarise the recommendations he made for managing emergency evacuation of our premises on a Sunday.
2. One of the chief recommendations was that there should be a responsible **DUTY ELDER** who was completely familiar with the emergency plan, should the alarm be sounded during a service. This “responsible person”, variously referred to as “Premises Manager”, “Duty Steward” or “Senior Person” in the Emergency Evacuation Plan (further copy attached) would ensure that everyone adhered to the plan’s procedures and provisions.
3. We have agreed that the **DUTY ELDER** should be:
  - the Mid-Foyer Elder before and during the 10.00 service and the subsequent refreshment break from 11.00 to 11.30;
  - the relevant Vestry Elder during and after the 11.30 service, and before, during and after the 18.30 service.(For 10.00 read 11.00 on the second Sunday of each month.)
4. A recent incident, when the fire alarm was accidentally activated on a Sunday morning, demonstrated that we need to tighten up on procedures.

The following additional responsibilities are suggested as preparation and action in the event of any emergency whilst services are taking place.

*(It should be noted that it is considered to be BAD practice for stewards to try to search or check buildings in the event of emergencies. Such activities are considered likely to impede rapid evacuation and carry the risk of poorly equipped people getting themselves stranded or trapped in hazardous areas. Good information and preparation are the responsibilities of Stewards; search and rescue are the responsibilities of the emergency services.)*

- Before each service the Duty Elder should check whether there is anyone using any part of the building apart from the Sanctuary, and remind them as necessary of the fire emergency notices on display. It is important that anyone using the building during and around Sunday services be aware that they are responsible for evacuating themselves and anyone with them from the building in the event of an emergency.

- All Elders present will help marshal people from the building via the most relevant fire exit;

- When the **DUTY ELDER** has left the building, s/he will check that all the known users have also left, and will be prepared to alert the Emergency Services if any group remains unaccounted for.
5. Please remember that the main fire exits are:
    - a. front doors to Sanctuary
    - b. street doors to Foyer (NB these open automatically when the fire alarm sounds)
    - c. emergency exit from Mayo Hall. This exit leads to Union Street via a passage in the ground floor of Millennium House
    - d. emergency exit next to Minister's Vestry.
  6. Break glass fire alarms are located as follows:
    - Ground floor lift lobby – under alarm panel
    - West stairs – ground, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors
    - East stairs – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors
    - Mayo Hall emergency exit
    - Basement
    - Ground floor – emergency exit near room 5
    - Roof Plant Room (x3)
  7. **Stuart Chandler** will check the following on a regular basis and ensure all doors are left secure after inspection:
    - date of last fire alarm/extinguisher inspection
    - that BOTH leaves of the door between Lift Lobby and Foyer are kept unlocked while building is occupied
    - that all three sanctuary doors to Eden Street can be opened
    - that emergency exit doors from Mayo Hall can be opened
    - that emergency exit next to Minister's Vestry can be opened
    - that door from west staircase into Lift Lobby can be opened
    - that electric doors from Lift Lobby to exterior open automatically when alarm is sounded (see 5)
    - that the key to the fire alarm control panel in the Lift Lobby is in place (HOOK 48 in regular key cabinet in Premises Manager's Office)
  8. Fire alarm can be de-activated from the control panel in the Lift Lobby using the key mentioned in the point above.

*(December 2015)*